



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 10/12/2006

GAIN Report Number: HU6013

Hungary

Biotechnology

Moratorium and Coexistence Legislation Update

2006

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Report Highlights:

On September 18, the Regulatory Committee of the DG Environment of the European Union voted against removing Hungary's moratorium on genetically modified corn variety imports. Meanwhile, the Government of Hungary is actively defending its moratorium because of lacking coexistence legislation to regulate the simultaneous production of conventional, organic, and biotech crops. Relevant committees of the Hungarian parliament have discussed a draft coexistence regulation with general parliamentary debate on this legislation to begin on October 16.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Vienna [AU1]
[HU]

Status of Product Approvals

On September 18, the Regulatory Committee of the DG Environment of the European Union voted against removing Hungary's moratorium on genetically modified corn variety imports. At the same time, the State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Mr. Zoltan Gogos, stressed that the full restriction of the imports of GMO varieties (a moratorium under the "safeguard clause", imposed in January 2005) cannot be maintained forever and urged the Hungarian Parliament to finalize legislation on coexistence (the simultaneous production of conventional and biotechnology plant varieties). The next decision about Hungary's moratorium will be in December when the Commission puts the vote on the agenda of the Council of Environmental Ministers.

Regulatory Framework

The Government of Hungary (GOH) filed a draft for the amendment ("coexistence regulation") of the Act XXVII/1998 on Gene Technology Activities, in July 2006. The corresponding Committees of the Parliament began debating the draft in early October 2006. The Environmental, European Union Affairs, and Economic Committees accepted the draft for general debate in the Parliament. However, the Agricultural, Health, and Human Rights Committees rejected the draft.

According to the rules of the Hungarian Parliament, the Minister of the MARD will table the draft amendment, and representatives of relevant committees will present their opinions at the beginning of the general debate in the Parliament on October 16.

The MARD has drafted implementation rules for the coexistence regulation as well. These ministry level rules will be finalized and made public after the coexistence regulation is approved by the Parliament. As a result, the setting up of the necessary administrative authorities for granting approvals and controlling biotech plantings could be completed by early next year.

For additional information on the biotech situation in Hungary, see GAINS report HU6008 Biotechnology, Annual Report.